

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended)      An egg-based material, the egg-based material comprising:  
an egg-based substance comprising between about 45 weight percent and 99.5 weight percent of the egg-based material, the egg-based substance comprising a natural liquid egg component;  
a water-absorbent thickener comprising between about 0.2 weight percent and 8 weight percent of the egg-based material, the water absorbing thickener being distributed throughout the egg-based material; and  
pieces of supplemental food distributed throughout the egg-based material, the water-absorbent thickener effective to maintain distribution of the pieces of supplemental food throughout the egg-based material.
2. (Original)    The egg-based material of claim 1 wherein the supplemental food is selected from the group consisting of cheese, cooked egg, meat, fish, shellfish, vegetables, fruit, grain, and any of these in any combination.
3. (Original)    The egg-based material of claim 1 wherein the natural liquid egg component is selected from natural liquid whole egg, natural liquid egg yolk, natural liquid egg white, and any combination of any of these.
4. (Original)    The egg-based material of claim 1 wherein the water-absorbent thickener comprises chunks, pieces, particles, or crumbs of a cooked food product.
5. (Original)    The egg-based material of claim 4 wherein the cooked food product is selected from the group consisting of bread, cracker, cookie, tortilla, breakfast cereal, cake, crust, and any of these in any combination.

6. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 4 wherein the concentration of the cooked food product in the egg-based material ranges up to as much as about 25 weight percent, based on the total weight of the egg-based material.

7. (Withdrawn)

8. (Withdrawn)

9. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 1 wherein heating of the egg-based material sufficient to substantially coagulate the natural liquid egg component is effective to transform the egg-based material into an egg-based product that exhibits freeze/thaw stability.

10. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 1 wherein the egg-based material has a fluid, flowable consistency.

11. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 1 wherein the water-absorbent thickener is capable of absorbing at least about 1.5 grams of water during a five minute absorption period when the temperature of the water ranges from about 35°F to about 70°F.

12. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 1 wherein the egg-based material further comprises a liquid dairy material.

13. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 12 wherein the liquid dairy material is selected from whole milk, reduced-fat milk, skim milk, dairy cream, buttermilk, sour cream, yogurt, and any of these in any combination.

14 – 16 (Withdrawn)

17. (Original) A cooked food product, the cooked food product comprising a form of the egg-based material of claim 1 wherein the natural liquid egg component is coagulated.

18. (Original) The cooked food product of claim 17 wherein the cooked food product exhibits freeze/thaw stability.

19. (Original) The cooked food product of claim 17 wherein the cooked food product has an outer surface, the cooked food product further comprising batter or breading affixed to the outer surface.

20. (Original) A fried food product, the fried food product comprising the cooked food product of claim 19 with a fried form of the batter or breading.

21. (Original) The fried food product of claim 20 wherein the fried food product exhibits freeze/thaw stability.

22. (Currently Amended) An egg-based material comprising:

an egg-based substance comprising between about 45 weight percent and 99.5 weight percent of the egg-based material, the egg-based substance comprising a natural liquid egg component; and

a cooked water-absorbent material distributed within the egg-based substance, the cooked water-absorbent material comprising about 0.2 and 8 weight percent of the egg-based material.

23. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 22 wherein:

the natural liquid egg component comprises free water; and

the cooked water-absorbent material comprises bread crumbs, free water of the natural liquid egg component absorbed in the breadcrumbs.

24. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 22 wherein the cooked water-absorbent material comprises chunks, pieces, particles, or crumbs of a cooked food product.

25. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 24 wherein the cooked food product is selected from the group consisting of bread, cracker, cookie, tortilla, breakfast cereal, cake, and crust.

26. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 22 wherein one gram of the cooked water-absorbent material is capable of absorbing at least about 1.5 grams of water during a five minute absorption period when the temperature of the water ranges from about 35°F to about 70°F.

27. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 22 wherein the egg-based substance further comprises a stabilizing agent, the concentration of the stabilizing agent in the egg-based material ranging up to about 5 weight percent, based on the total weight of the egg-based material, and the concentration of the cooked water-absorbent material in the egg-based material ranging up to about 25 weight percent, based on the total weight of the egg-based material.

28. (Original) A cooked food product, the cooked food product comprising a form of the egg-based material of claim 22 wherein the natural liquid egg component is coagulated.

29. (Original) The cooked food product of claim 28 wherein the cooked food product exhibits freeze/thaw stability.

30. (Original) The cooked food product of claim 28 wherein the cooked food product has an outer surface, the cooked food product further comprising batter or breading affixed to the outer surface.

31. (Original) A fried food product, the fried food product comprising the cooked food product

of claim 30 with a fried form of the batter or breading.

32. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 22, the egg-based material further comprising pieces of supplemental food.

33. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 32 wherein the supplemental food is selected from the group consisting of cheese, cooked egg, meat, fish, shellfish, vegetables, fruit, grain, and any of these in any combination.

34. (Original) A cooked food product, the cooked food product comprising a form of the egg-based material of claim 32 wherein the natural liquid egg component is coagulated.

35. (Currently Amended) An egg-based material, the egg-based material comprising:  
an egg-based substance comprising between about 45 weight percent and 99.5 weight percent of the egg-based material, the egg-based substance comprising a natural liquid egg component;  
a water-absorbent material comprising between about 0.2 and 8.0 weight percent of the egg-based material, one gram of the water-absorbent material effective to absorb at least about 1.5 grams of water during a five minute absorption period when the temperature of the water ranges from about 35°F to about 70°F; and  
a liquid dairy material.

36. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 35 wherein the liquid dairy material is selected from whole milk, reduced-fat milk, non-fat milk, dairy cream, buttermilk, sour cream, yogurt, and any of these in any combination.

37. (Original) A cooked food product, the cooked food product comprising a form of the egg-

based material of claim 35 wherein the natural liquid egg component is coagulated.

38. (Original) The cooked food product of claim 37 wherein the cooked food product exhibits freeze/thaw stability.

39. (Original) The cooked food product of claim 37 wherein the cooked food product has an outer surface, the cooked food product further comprising batter or breading affixed to the outer surface.

40. (Original) A fried food product, the fried food product comprising the cooked food product of claim 39 with a fried form of the batter or breading.

41. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 35, the egg-based material further comprising pieces of supplemental food.

42. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 41 wherein the supplemental food is selected from the group consisting of cheese, cooked egg, meat, fish, shellfish, vegetables, fruit, grain, and any of these in any combination.

43. (Original) A cooked food product, the cooked food product comprising a form of the egg-based material of claim 41 wherein the natural liquid egg component is coagulated.

44-52 (Withdrawn)

53. (Currently Amended) An egg-based material, the egg-based material comprising:  
an egg-based substance comprising between about 45 weight percent and 99.5 weight percent of the egg-based material, the egg-based substance comprising a natural liquid egg component;  
a water-absorbent material comprising between about 0.2 and 8.0 weight percent of the egg-based material, one gram of the water-absorbent material effective to absorb at least about 1.5 grams of water during a five minute absorption period when the temperature of the water ranges from about 35°F to about 70°F; and  
added water.

54. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 53 wherein the egg-based material has a fluid, flowable consistency.

55. (Original) A cooked food product, the cooked food product comprising a form of the egg-based material of claim 53 wherein the natural liquid egg component is coagulated.

56. (Original) The cooked food product of claim 55 wherein the cooked food product exhibits freeze/thaw stability.

57. (Original) The cooked food product of claim 55 wherein the cooked food product has an outer surface, the cooked food product further comprising batter or breading affixed to the outer surface.

58. (Original) A fried food product, the fried food product comprising the cooked food product of claim 57 with a fried form of the batter or breading.

59. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 53, the egg-based material further comprising

pieces of supplemental food.

60. (Original) A cooked food product, the cooked food product comprising a form of the egg-based material of claim 59 wherein the natural liquid egg component is coagulated.

61. (Currently Amended) An egg-based material, the egg-based material comprising:  
an egg-based substance comprising between about 45 weight percent and 99.5 weight percent of the egg-based material, the egg-based substance comprising a natural liquid egg component;  
a stabilizing agent;  
a water-absorbent material comprising between about 0.2 and 8.0 weight percent of the egg-based material; and  
added water.

62. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 61 wherein the stabilizing agent comprises starch or gum.

63. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 61 wherein one gram of the water-absorbent material is effective to absorb at least about 1.5 grams of water during a five minute absorption period when the temperature of the water ranges from about 35°F to about 70°F.

64. (Original) A cooked food product, the cooked food product comprising a form of the egg-based material of claim 61 wherein the natural liquid egg component is coagulated.

65. (Original) The cooked food product of claim 64 wherein the cooked food product has an outer surface, the cooked food product further comprising batter or breading affixed to the outer surface.



66. (Original) A fried food product, the fried food product comprising the cooked food product of claim 65 with a fried form of the batter or breading.

67. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 61, the egg-based material further comprising pieces of supplemental food.

68. (Original) A cooked food product, the cooked food product comprising a form of the egg-based material of claim 67 wherein the natural liquid egg component is coagulated.